A HUNCH ON HEREDITY

One of the Intensely Interesting Adventures of Bill Titus, in an Oil-Boom Town of the Great Southwest.

By J. Frank Davis.

NEARLY ALL OF THEM WERE OF FOREIGN BLOOD.

BILL TITUS, in the boom oil city of Spiller, sat with his ear pressed to the receiver and listened gravely to the voice of the Governor of Texas, talking from Austin.

"So that's the story, captain," the governor concluded. "Sheriff McGovern could handle it if he was there, but he's gone up into Oklahoma to get a prisoner. I'm sending Capt. Dalton and four of his rangers to take charge, if necessary, but they can't get to Spiller until about 8 o'clock tomorrow morning, even if the train is on time, which it usually isn't, I am told. And we don't want any bloodshed to grow out of that meeting tonight. It is easier to stop trouble before it gets started than after."

"I understand. All right, suh. What do you want me to do?"

"Whatever is necessary. None of these strikers is connected with any of the oil companies you are interested in, I hear."

"Nary one. I've been a little particular about who got jobs with me lately, and every boss and driller in my outfits is a Texan. These fellers that are making the trouble are mostly from outside. My men ain't affected; they ain't even in sympathy with the strikers. Properly speaking, it isn't a labor trouble a-tall, and there haven't many regular, honest-to-God Texans got bit with this bolsheviki bug yet. 'Tain't in the Texas blood to catch it."

"That is what I understood. You can depend on your own men to back you up, if there is any difficulty. And there must be quite a few other men that you know over there—ol'-timers—who would stay with you if it was necessary."

"I can find a few. They'd hang on their old guns and ——"

"But that is exactly what I don't want," the governor protested. "I want things held just as they are until Dalton and his men arrive. And yet that meeting tonight is loaded with dynamite. It will take some able diplomacy to prevent these men who are agitating for the 'one big union' from getting trouble going. I think you are the man who can do it. Of course, if you try and don't succeed, then your ol'timer friends can be prepared——"

"I get you," Bill rejoined. "What kind of authority have I got?"

"The best there is. I'll appoint you temporarily a ranger, assigned to special service. I'll have the adjutant general call up the mayor and tell him you are in charge."

"That's all right," Capt. Titus agreed, "but maybe it would be just as well, suh, if the mayor didn't tell anybody except maybe a few police officers, so as to keep them from interferin' with whatever I have to do—and a deputy sheriff or so."

The governor thought this over a moment. "Very well," he agreed. "I'm leaving the whole business in your hands. You know the men who are doing the really dagerous agitating, don't you?"

"I know three of them; the three worst. Raber is the leader, from Chicago. Christiansen, from the Lord knows where—he's the one that says he is a North Dakota farmer and talks a bunch of arguments no farmer with brains would use, in North Dakota or anywhere else. And Mullins, from Cleveland, who raised all that hades last month up in the territory, until it go so hot he thought he and Oklahoma had better part company."

"You know who the speakers are to be tonight, I suppose," the governor said.

"No. The drillers on our properties say they understand these outside leaders ain't even going to be on the platform."

"Young Travis Hudston hasn't arrived there yet, I take it. I hear he is to be the principal speaker. Do you know him?"

"Know him! The cussed little fool! His daddy and me were in the Rangers together. I haven't seen Travis for some years; he hasn't been in Texas much since he grew up. But I've kept track of him."

"They say he's a convincing speaker. Maybe it would be best to get him as he hikes into town and hike him out again."

"No, suh, if you'll excuse me. The one thing these fellers want is for somebody to tell 'em they kain't hold that meeting, or to keep their speakers from talking. No, suh. It wouldn't do a-tall."

"All right," the governor said. "I'm putting you in charge. Handle it any way you want to. But prevent disorder if it is humanly possible."

For perhaps five minutes after the receiver had been restored to its hook Capt. Bill sat in concentrated thought. He walked briskly out of the hotel then, and turned in at a store, the somewhat striking sign of which proclaimed to the world that Sam W. Burns there purveyed to the public's need for "lumber, hardware, paints, coffins, caskets and furniture."

"There's a chance of trouble here tonight, Sam," said Bill, "and the governor's elected me to prevent it, with what assistance I want to call for from ol'-timers and such."

"I'm getting a little along in years for excitement and I hoped the rest of my life was going to be quiet," Mr. Burns declared, with an expression in his eye that directly contradicted his words, "but I happened to clean up my li'l' ol' six-gun only last week."

"That's muy bueno. If there's got to be any shootin', nobody would expect us to stand around and let somebody else do all of it—but the rules of this game the governor has asked us to sit into mostly provide for peaceful persuasion. It's thisaway." Briefly Bill reviewed the state executive's conversation. "After Bob Dalton gets here, he can have shootin' or not, just as the cards happen to fall. Our business is to keep things from breakin' wide open till he arrives. I want you to pick up six or seven others; there ain't much time, and I've got to take a ride out Mule creek way and be back in time for the night performance. And, remember, the governor has laid out how he wants this party conducted, and she's got to be done like he says. The men are to prepare for war, but strive for peace."

Burns sighed, but nodded agreement. "All right," he said. "I'll see they strive for it, but I ain't figurin' I can make them hope for it. The way these roughnecks from up in Chicago and New York and around thataway have come into this community almin' to run it——"

"That's the argument," Bill interrupted enthusiastically. "I'll use it at what these efficiency sharps call the psychological moment."

"Don't be this psychology thing," Burns admitted.

"But you used it, constant, when you were in the Rangers. Every man in the service is strong for psychological stuff, whether he knows what the word means or not. And there's another thing I'm a believer in. Heredity. You knew Jack Hudston. What was his weakness? Didn't you ever see him lose his head a little? That time he had taken charge of San Pedro county, for instance?"

"Oh, that. He was borrawed. That sheriff he was removin' made him look sort of ridiculous."

"And he went plumb loco for a minute and did the wrong thing. Ol' Jack must be wriggling in his grave if he knows what that ornamental son of his is saying and doing, these days, but I'm betting the kid has got some of the old man's traits, and that might be one of them."

"Well, even so," Burns commented, uncomprehendingly.

"That's where maybe the psychology business comes in. Heredity plus psychology equals——"

"What?"

"You can't tell till you add 'em up. And you can't add 'em up till you get 'em set down in a column, one on top of the other. * * * I'm driftin' toward Mule creek; you rustle around and get your ol'-timers. If you can stretch that six or seven into ten or a dozen, better and better. And have 'em all on the edges of the crowd, tonight, with their guns out of sight, and make 'em understand, never mind what happens, they ain't to mix into anything unless I give 'em the high sign."

"Where'll you be?"

"If luck breaks right, I'll be on the platform."

An hour later Capt. Bill stood beside his little automobile on the property of the Three Counties Oil Company, which he owned, in earnest conversation with Gillespie, the superintendent.

"All told, then, you don't believe more than a quarter of the drillers in the whole field are really tied up to this 'seize the source of production' idea?"

"Less than that," Gillespie declared. "Not an eighth. But that isn't saying more than a quarter wouldn't participate if anything rough gets started. It might be more than half. A lot of the foreigners in the field are really believers in anarchy and direct action and all that."

"Texans, most of the others, ain't they?"

"A majority of the men in the field must be Texans."

"Texans don't run to anarchy much."

"No," Gillespie agreed, "but some of these drillers are a wild lot, and excitement sure appeals to them. They don't aim to be anarchists—yet if these 'wobblies' were to get anything to going——"

"But they are Texans," Bill said, thoughtfully. "Daddies rode pitchin' hawses and branded steers, and helped a sheriff catch a rustler, maybe, or, if there wasn't a sheriff handy, hitched on firearms and administered a little law themselves."

"What are you driving at, Cap'n?"

"I was sort of considering this hereditary thing—that and youthful environment. These young roughnecks might be swung into action one way by sheer love of excitement and a good scrap, you say. They could be swung the other way, maybe, by——" He stopped and eyed he nearest tire speculatively.

"By what?" Gillespie prompted, after many seconds.

"I ain't sure. I've got to think that over. Meantime, you have those five drillers you can absolutely trust at tonight's meeting, like I said."

'One at Raber's elbow; one beside Christiansen; one close to Mullins; the other two sticking to those two agitators that came in yesterday from the north that we don't know so much about."

"That's it," Bill said, and climbed into his car.

Travis Hudston, born an American, but influenced by a notoriety-seeking professor of economics to turn into the mad paths of what is called "internationalism" by those who are not careful of their definitions, did not conceal his surprise when Capt. Titus came cordially through the little knot of syndicalist leaders and local trikers that surrounded him in the office of the hotel.

"Welcome to our fair city, Trav," the captain hailed. "It must be all of ten years since I've seen you here in Texas. We've kept track of you."

Young Hudston, who had been of the impression that all his father's friends who had kept track of him had done so disapprovingly, warmed to the greeting, although Raber, the Chicagoan, who stood at his shoulder, scowled. "Howdy, Cap'n Titus," he said, with a conscious relapse into the idiom of his boyhood. "I didn't expect to see you up here. Aen't you still hanging out at Summerton?"

"I hang out where my hat does," Bill laughed. "At Summerton a little, at San 'Ntonio more, up here some. I'm interested in one or two of these oil properties here in Spiller.

Hudston stiffened. "Then you and I are on opposite sides in this controversy."

"Not necessarily," smiled Bill. "Not necessarily. There isn't any strike on my properties; your friends here will tell you I pay as good wages as any operator in the field." He beamed pleasantly in the direction of Raber and Christiansen. "And I don't know as any workman ever had occasion to call me names. Maybe that's because I remember how it seemed to be a workingman myself. Your daddy and me weren't exactly what you could call gentlemen of leisure when we were young fellers, you know." Bill turned to the bystanders. "This boy's daddy was some able citizen, if you ask me. Hearing, as we have down thisaway, that Trav, here, was making a name for himself up in New York and all, we ain't been surprised a bit. Not a little bit."

Hudston, both puzzled and gratified by Bill's greeting, replied with self-conscious complacency:

"I'm afraid father might not have agreed with all the principles my studies and investigations impel me to advocate, these days," he began.

"How do you know that?" interrupted Bill. "What makes you think he wouldn't be willing to listen to all sides of a proposition and then take a stand on the right side?"

"Why, I didn't intend to imply that he wouldn't. But in this great battle between the people and the privileged class——"

"He was people," Bill again broke in. "As good people as they make 'em. And you're his boy. By golly! I wish I was going to have the chance to introduce you to that crowd tonight."

Raber of Chicago spoke two words: "Why not?"

"But Cap'n Titus represents——" Hudston began, and then stopped. It came into his mind, as it had come into Raber's, that a complimentary introduction of the speaker of the evening by a man of Titus' standing might influence auditors who would not otherwise be moved by his eloquence.

"Oh, of course, I was only talking," Bill hastened to say. "But there's a thing I wanted to tell you, and it's all right to say it before these friends of yours, I figure. I was talking to the governor, and we happened to speak of you, and I told him the son of your father ought to have—— Well,"—Bill hesitated a second—"there were some kind o' conservative folks didn't want to have you given what you might call a free rein. Thought you ought to be told to put on the soft pedal on your beliefs, or something like that. And I said to the governor that the son of your daddy, in the good ol' state of Texas, ought to have absolutely free speech."

Young Hudston's eyes were eager. "Would you be willing to tell that to the audience?"

"Tell it to anybody in the world; it ain't any secret."

Raber nodded sharply to Hudston, who cried:

"You're the very man to introduce me, Cap'n Titus. Will you?"

The big audience that stretched for fifty yards in front of the bandstand in a vacant space just beyond the thickly settled portion of the boom city hushed its confused chatter, and a good many of its members exclaimed with surprise as Capt. Bill came up the steps at the rear of the stand into the illumination of the flambeaux at its four corners, and followed Travis Hudston to the rows of chairs that had been reserved for the speakers. Instantly the confusion of mind that Raber had counted on began to spread. What was the man who was reputed to be the wealthiest ex-ranger in Texas doing on the stage at such a meeting as this?

A local I. W. W. leader called for order and introduced a local speaker. The man made a talk concerning only hours and wages. Those who had come to the meeting expecting to hear violence preached began to get uneasy and disappointed. Then the chairman introduced "our friend and fellow-townsman, Capt. William T. Titus," and the crowd hushed itself.

"I have come here," Bill announced, "at the request of the son of one of the best friends I ever had, to introduce him and tell you who he is. I reckon a good many of you know who Laughin' Jack Hudston was, and how he come by his name. I was in the rangers with Jack, and he shore did nearly laugh his head off when he was in the thick of a bad fight—but his laughin' didn't interfere with his shootin' any that could be noticed."

A murmur of approval rustled through the crowd.

"I've taken part in quite a number of little affairs with Jack," Bill went on. "I knew him when he was just a young feller on the Bar V Triangle Ranch, and I knew him when he joined out with the rangers, and as long as he stayed in the service, and I knew him through all the rest of his life up to the very day he was killed, and there wasn't a yellow streak in him from his hat to his spurs. And that's why I'm standing here tonight to introduce his boy and tell you something about him—because I think Jack Hudston would want me to do just what I'm here to do. But before i go any farther I've got a little message I've been asked to give you from the governor of the state of Texas.

"What the governor asked me to say to you men of Spiller was this: We in Texas ain't afraid of publicity. And the governor asks you to let every speaker at this meeting who has got anything he wants to say, say it. So I'm asking you—and I'm speaking for the governor—to hear what he has to be said, and to listen respectfully, whether you agree or not. I introduce to you, gentlemen, Mr. Travis Hudston of New York city."

Hudston, as he faced the audience, thought that Bill must have got carried away by his own eloquence to have forgotten to tell the crowd more about who he personally was. He also regretted that the captain had referred to him as a New Yorker; he would rather, on this occasion, have been credited to his native state. As the applause began to lessen, he held up his hand for more complete silence, and shouted, in a trained voice that carried to the farthest reaches of the crowd:

"Comrades!"

There is no need to repeat the speech here; the transcript of what he said at first would be, albeit perhaps it was there not put in as good English as he used, almost word for word what you have heard shouted by soap-box orators in Union Square. He knew Bill Titus was a man of his word, and not in months had he dared in a public place to come so near to speaking exactly what he thought. Then, carried away by his own enthusiasm, he talked too much.

"What have we, the laborers of the world, to do with national flags?" he cried. "What are the flags of capitalistic states and capitalistic nations to us? Pieces of bunting, sewed together, to which organized wealth commands that we shall bow down in what capital cunningly calls 'patriotism'——"

There were shouts of "No!" "That'll be about all!" "That's going too far!" while Raber and his followers cheered and shouted down the protesters near them.

"Wait!" "Quiet!" "Cap'n Titus wants to speak!" Sam Burns and his old-timer friends started the demand for order. Gillespie's drillers helped it along. The uncertain in the audience swayed with them, and then Raber, who had wide experience with men in the mass and sensed more of an opposition than he had anticipated, added his voice and the voices of his lieutenants to the appeal for peace. The crowd quieted.

"It don't hurt us to listen!" The captain's voice boomed over the heads of the crowd. "It don't hurt us to hear just what this young man and his friends want. I say all Americans ought to know it. I call on you, in the name of the governor, in the name of the state itself, to let him have his say. Let's have free speech."

"That's it! Free speech!" yelled Raber and his friends and all of Bill's friends.

But Hudston was unable to go ahead with the same fire and assurance that had marked his previous words. He said nothing more about flags, but began to talk of sovietism and what he called the American misunderstanding of the soviet principle, inculcated and fostered by a capitalistic press. He wound up rather lamely with an appeal for sympathy with and membership in the one big union, and stepped back to his chair. The presiding officer rose, with glasses on his nose and a paper in his hand—a resolution, it might be inferred, which would commit the meeting to radical and probably "direct" action—but Capt. Titus was at the front of the stage ahead of him and had begun to talk.

"This is a night of free speech," he began, "and I've got a few words I want to get out of my system. We workingmen have got to hang together, just like my young friend from New York said."

A good many men tittered Bill Titus, within the recollection of young persons, had never been regarded as within the category of laborers.

"It ain't any cause for laughter," Bill defended, indignantly. "We're all of us workingmen. Some of us"—he gestured indefinitely over the crowd—"have calluses on our hands. Some of us"—he embraced himself and Hudston in an including motion—"have calluses on our brains. Hold on!" in mock protest, as the jest won a laugh. "I didn't mean what you thought I meant—natchully." And won another. "What I mean to say," he went on, "is that everybody that works, whether he does it with his head or his hands, ought to have a sight in the pot, in proportion to what he has on the table in front of him. That's according to Hoyle, ain't it?"

"Oh, you table stakes!" a young driller, near the front cried, and there was some applause. Bill recognized the boy as a wild youth who had recently returned from France with medals and prestige and had shown signs of becoming inoculated with dangerous doctrines and threw his reply directly at him:

"What would you do to the feller after you'd got your chips in the pot, who said the other players would divide it without giving you a show?" And went on, before the boy or anybody else could answer:

"If Mr. Hudston had said that every feller who puts in chips—labor, invention, brains, money, whatever is needed—ought to get a sight, I would agree with him. Lots of you fellers know me. Anybody ever know me not to give a man a fair run for his money?"

"No!" came from a good many throats. Raber didn't like the looks of things and hurled a sudden interruption:

"I rise to a point of order, Mr. Chairman. Where does this sorta talk come in at a workingmen's meetin'?"

"Wait a minute!" Bill had his right hand up in the air, palm outward, fingers spread. "I'll match calluses with you, Raber, this minute. When did you ever work with your hands? And at that," he told the crowd in booming confidence, "I haven't got but one callus on my hand. That's where a man used to grow a callus handling a Colt." He remarked, and completed the sentence significantly in Raber's direction.

"And now I've only got to say something I sort of overlooked when I made my first speech tonight, and then I'll sit down and give whoever else wants to free speech a little his chance. This boy's great-gran'daddy fought at San Jacinto. His gran'-daddy was in the war between the states. His daddy was as brave a Ranger as I ever rode with. He worked, too, with his hands. And with his head. You've heard, maybe, about how, after he got out of the Rangers and went into cattle raisin', Jack had luck. As a matter of fact, it wasn't luck a-tall. Luck—regular, real luck—is spelled with a P. That's what Jack Hudston had—Pluck. And when he went out one day to help a sheriff and a couple of Rangers do their duty by the state of Texas, and got killed, he left almost $600,000"—Bill was grinning broadly now—"every cent to this young, soft-handed, tea-table workingman. He still has it, plus a good deal that it has earned in interest, so my bankin' friends tell me." He wheeled on Hudston and snapped a question:

"When are you going to divide it?"

Hudston was on his feet, facing the uproar. His face flushed. With Bill's sarcastic taunt in his ears his self-possession left him and he sputtered absurdly.

"Back in the days right after the war between the states there were terrible times here in Texas. Listen, men! Your daddies have told you about them; some of us here can remember them. Texas was a part of the confederacy, and the confederacy lost. And then some things happened that would never have happened if a poor, insane man hadn't killed Abraham Lincoln, and the men of Texas—and old Jim Hudston was one of them—sent word to Washington city, 'We cain't stand it,' they said. 'We've put aside the Stars and Bars forever. We're back under the Stars and Stripes. God helping us, we'll aid in rebuilding our state as part of one nation under that flag. But either you'll give us a government such as white men are entitled to, with liberty and justice for all, or, hopeless as it is, we shall rebel. And that rebellion will not end in surrender; it will never be put down until the last man of us has died like our ancestors who made holy ground of the Alamo.' And the big-hearted, silent soldier in the White House heard the message, and Texas became free from the oppression of the carpet-bagger."

There was a tumultuous outburst that convinced Bill he needed only to make his final point.

"Under two flags Texas gained freedom," he cried. "One, the Lone Star banner that struck terror to Santa Anna at San Jacinto; the other, the Stars and Stripes under which, only yesterday, Texans shed their blood at Chateau Thierry and in the Argonne. Were either of these flags mere 'pieces of bunting, sewed together?'"

"I'll say they were not!" yelled the young soldier near the bandstand, and more than three-quarters of the crowd cheered him and Bill.

"And who and what were the men who crowded Texas to the wall after she had been honorably defeated in the war of the states—who came from God knows where to rule and govern—until Travis Hudston's gran'daddy and thousands of other good men threatened to die deliberately for the shame of it? Carpet-baggers!"

He gritted the word.

"Where do you come from, Raber? Chicago. Where do you come from, Christiansen? North Dakota—perhaps. And you, Mullins? From Cleveland, isn't it?" Bill laughed and waved a hand toward Hudston. "And our poor little rich workingman who hasn't lived in Texas since he was sixteen, and has forgotten the kind of liberty his kin fought for, is from New York."

He made a gesture of ineffable disgust and repeated the epithet than which, for all the years that have passed, there is only one more offensive in Texas:

"All carpet-baggers!"

Raber, Christiansen and Mullins were outlanders; the phrase meant little or nothing to them; they did not even know they had been insulted. But Hudston? Bill waited almost breathlessly for the youth's reaction, and did not have to wait two seconds. Hudston was on his feet, his features now pale and distorted, his teeth showing between drawn lips. "You are a liar!" he shouted, and leaped across the stage, fists clenched, to say it squarely in Bill's face.

The crowd fell tensely quiet and Bill made his next move with lightning decision. He laughed loudly, and as he laughed his left hand shot out and seized Hudston by the collar, spinning him around. As the young man whirled helplessly Bill swung his right hand, wide open, below the level of his waist, and added its force to the push he gave with his left. Hudston went stumbling. Bill laughed again. "Oh, go on, you—boy!" he cried.

There had been no great effort behind that right-handed slap; it had looked careless and contemptuous; but not a man in the watching hundreds missed the point. Hudston had been spanked.

They also laughed.

Raber, Christiansen, Mullins and their close friends, huddled well together for mutual protection, began to edge out of the crowd.

"Let 'em go, fellow Texans," Bill shouted, still grinning. "Thirteenth have been pulled."

The chairman had already fled. Bill turned then, to find himself facing Hudston. A much different Hudston from the self-satisfied parlor internationalist who had spoken to glibly.

"You insulted me," he stammered, thickly. "You—you made a fool of me. I've got a pistol—my father's—and I'm going to get it. I'm going to get it and kill you—or you're going to kill me." Tears of mingled anger and humiliation stood in his eyes.

Bill noded and answered him gravely, as man to man.

"Not tonight," he said. "I'm too busy tonight. But if you will hang on that li'l' ol' pistol and come along Main street at about quarter of 8 tomorrow mawnin' you'll find me somewhere along in front of Sam Burns' store. I'll see that the police don't interfere."

Hudston swallowed, started to speak again, gave it up and turned abruptly away. Bill left the bandstand at once and came finally to Mr. Burns' emporium, where he went to a door in the rear and found Burns and a number of other men waiting in a back room.

"Sam," he said, "Tray Hudston is plannin' to shoot me along about quarter of 8 tomorrow. Will you, by and by, take a walk over to the mayor's house and tell him to pass the word along to the police to keep their hands off?"

"The little fool!" Burns ejaculated. "Don't he know you can kill him while he's getting ready?"

"I reckon so. I don't suppose he's handled a Colt since he left Texas, which is right close to fifteen years ago. Yes, suh. He's shore aimin' to commit suicide. And for me to throw lead at him would certainly be plum murder."

"What do you mean, Bill?" Burns demanded. "After what's happened, you cain't stay away."

"I don't guess I can," Bill agreed simply. "But I don't have to hurt him, do I? You wasn't thinkin, I'd hurt Jack Hudston's boy, was you Sam?"

"But he'll—— You don't mean you expect to take the chance of missing him."

"Maybe it wouldn't be such a chance. He's nervous, and he'll be more so before mawnin'. He won't figure he's got a chance if he shoots slow, and if he tries to shoot fast he probably couldn't hit a cow at ten feet. I'm thinking he'll shoot fast. The only thing that sort of puzzles me is what he'll do if after he's wasted three or four cartridges he finds I ain't hittin' him. Maybe he'll slow up and take aim. If he does—— Say, fellers, I want every man of you to promise one thing. If any accident happens, I want him given a fair chance. Let the jury know that I had agreed to meet him and that I had insulted him—like I shorely did. And get some ol'-timers on it. Ol'-timers that will appreciate what it means to be called a carpet-bagger. I've got a little scheme running in my head. If he's a bit the kind of a man his father was it'll work. If he isn't—— Maybe it'll be sort of a gamble, but I'm going to play a little hunch on heredity. Jack Hudston was a darn' fine man, fellers." * * *

Travis Hudston came down Main street at quarter of 8. Behind him were Raber and Christiansen and Mullins, and twenty-five or thirty of the most radical and desperate of their friends, nearly all of them of foreign blood. Hudston was coatless, and a Colt forty-five swung in a holster from his belt—hung too high and too far back. His face was colorless and his features were drawn and haggard. He had his teeth set, trying his best to achieve calmness, but his hands trembled.

As he saw Capt. Bill come out of Burns' store, alone, the youth hesitated almost imperceptibly, then stepped resolutely into the street.

They were still a good fifteen yards apart when Bill threw his hands wide from his body, and, so holding them, strode into the highway. He wore a coat, unbuttoned, and his low-hanging holster showed plainly beneath it. At his surprising gesture Hudston stopped and waited, his eyes wide, watching.

"Tray Hudston," Bill called clearly, "You know me and I know you. You know that I understand handling a pistol some, and I know that if you understand one you probably ain't in practice. You're entitled to a handicap; it ain't any more than fair to equalize things by giving you one.

"I ought to be three times as fast as you. I reckon I should shoot five or six times while you was shooting twice. Begin when you get ready. I'm going to give you four shots before I go after my gun a-tall. But if you haven't put me out of business with those first four shots, don't lose any time with the last two, because it might be fatal. Come on, son! Let's go!"

A murmur of ejaculations from the spectators followed this startling announcement of terms and subsided instantly into silence. Hudston stared in astonishment, almost as if he had not heard, or, hearing, could not understand. Then, slowly, clumsily, he drew his pistol—and fired four shots into the air.

The morning train, for once on time, came to a stop while Bill was making his declaration, although nobody in the crowd heard it, and around a corner three blocks behind Hudston five men, at the sound of the shots, came running. Bill saw them and recognized the lean figure of Capt. Bob Dalton in the lead.

With the sound of the fourth wasted shot, Bill's hand whipped to his pistol. Hudston tried to aim and fire in Bill's direction; tried too nervously and fired too quickly. The bullet sped harmlessly past its mark, two feet distant.

And then the spectators, gasping with excitement, saw that Bill was tugging at his Colt, and that it had caught in his holster and would not come loose. Trav Hudston saw it, too. Slowly he braced himself and took careful aim. His hand shook, but the wobbling muzzle finally settled to cover the captain's body, well down to take care of the recoil, as his father had taught him. Bill's hand was still dragging impotently at his gun, but he was looking straight across into the youth's eyes and smiling. "Come on, son!" he shouted. "You'll have to hurry!"

One second the boy stared, trying to press the trigger. Then he dropped his pistol on the ground with a sob. "You killed the men that killed my father," he choked. "Damn it, I can't!"

"I can. The old interferin' hound!" snarled Raber. "Here we go, men! Come on!" And his hand snapped toward his pocket. Before it got there Bill's first bullet smashed his wrist and his second bullet his shoulder.

"You're wrong, Rabowski," the old man exulted. "My gun only sticks when I'm fightin' with my friends."

It was waving now across the face of the surging crowd of reds, and out of the open doorway of Burns' store flowed swiftly a stream of grim-faced, stern-eyed men, ten of them, all middle-aged, all competent, each carrying a ready weapon.

"Ranger service!" Bill shouted, as the disciples of violence, who had leaned forward snarling, hesitated. "Don't go after any firearms, hombres! Put your hands up, and keep 'em up. In the name of the state of Texas!"

Trav Hudston picked up his father's pistol from the dust at his feet and came running to stand beside Bill. "I'm with you—and for it!" he panted. "I've got only one cartridge, but I can't miss the whole crowd. The damn' thugs!"

Capt. Bob Dalton and his rangers were there, taking the bad men from behind, covering them with heavy six-shooters, disarming them, handcuffing together those who were found to have guns or knives—nearly all of them.

Bill lowered his pistol and smiled affecionately on Hudston.

"You don't shoot like your daddy, Trav," he said. "But, by golly! when it gets down to cases you think like him."

(Copyright, 1920.)

Bachelor's Hall.

GOV. RITCHIE of Maryland was talking about the proposed bachelor tax.

"It will be a good thing," he said. "Bachelors should be discouraged.

"Two bachelors were talking one day in the dust and disorder of a bachelor's apartment house.

"'Say, Bill, ever try your hand at cookin'?' the younger bachelor asked.

"'Well,' drawled the older man, 'I did buy one of them cook books once, but I couldn't do nothin' with it.'

"'How was that, Bill?'

"'Why, every one of the durn recipes began with the same words. Yes, they all began with "Take a clean dish"—and, naturally, I never got no further.'"

'Victory Banner' Represents Allied Nations in the War

Red Cross to Fly Flag With Unique Design When Roll Call Is Opened on Armistice Day—Designer Tells of Idea.

A STRIKING "victory banner," to be used in the coming Red Cross roll call, to be opened on Armistice day, has been conceived and designed by S. Walter Krebs, composer. Mr. Krebs conceived the banner November 9, 1918, and designed and drew it two days later.

It was first presented at a banquet given in honor of Charles M. Schwab by the Society of Arts and Sciences, New York, November 13, 1918. Mr. Schwab said of the design: "I received the victory flag and liked it very much. It seemed to me to be very appropriate, quite unique and pretty in design."

The banner is in appropriate colors to the nations represented. Mr. Krebs explains the design as follows:

"The Belgian and Serbian flags, representative of the smaller nations, in the center of a victory wreath, protected by it and the larger allied countries.

THE "VICTORY BANNER."

* * * *

"Two English-speaking nations and two Latin-speaking nations, representative of the larger nations, opposite each other in a diagonal way, makes a balance in the combination, the center of which contains a victory wreath; victory not only for the ideals of democracy, but of the sea and sky, shown by the blue surrounding the wreath. The number of allied or associated countries is indicated by the petals on the wreath.

"As a background, the paths of life, with all their meanings, from victory over suffering and death to the spirit of brotherhood and high ideals, reaching north, south, east and west, with an earnest binding influence, into all space—and a background that signifies peace, which all these things mean.

"The multiplication and plus signs, positive factors, are shown in the design. The two English-speaking nations, with their line crossing that of the two Latin-speaking nations, form the multiplication sign, which, with the plus sign formed by the paths of life, show that they should in all forget November 9, 1918? The day when about 10 o'clock almost every newspaper issued an extra, stating that the war was over, though not officially confirmed until the eleventh hour, the eleventh day of the eleventh month. And how the people just brimmed over, not only in the streets, but in their hearts and little impromptu celebrations.

* * * *

At 10 o'clock on the morning of the 9th I was passing the Grand Central station, when the first news of the victory greeted me. Walking on toward 5th avenue, where the crowds were blocking the traffic and enthusiasm gathering, the idea of a victory design came to me.

Continuing down 5th avenue to 40th street, the idea there assumed definite form, which I was only too eager to on paper. As one had to practically follow the sardine-like crowd, it took me down 5th avenue to the nearest place of my acquaintance, the Musical Courier, at 39th street. After asking for the loan of a red and blue pencil, and on the desk first owned by the Courier, I sketched the victory design.

"Leaving the Courier office, one had to literally struggle against many odds, so to speak. I finally reached Aeolian Hall, where the design was shown to a woman prominent in society. She liked the ideas therein expressed, remarked that the Society of Arts and Sciences was giving a banquet in honor of Charles M. Schwab on the 13th of that month, and thought it would be quite the thing to have it first displayed on this occasion. The director of the Society of Arts and Sciences also thought well of the design and wished to have it hung at the banquet, if a banner or flag could be made in time. As there were only four more days until the banquet, an embroidered flag or banner, or one of bunting, could not have been made in that space of time; so the only thing possible was to have the design painted on cloth. This was done, and on Wednesday afternoon the flag was delivered at the ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria.

"The banquet was a memorable affair, rendered doubly so coming right after the signing of the armistice. The menu-folder had a special insert, upon which was included a condensed description of the victory design.

"The victory design is said to be the first conceived and has been remarked and commented upon for its many meanings and significance, the beauty of the design itself, that to any question asked why is this here, or that there, a logical answer can readily be given and that the design will still have its meaning and merits throughout the years.

"During the victory liberty loan several original posters were on exhibition in the busiest parts of 5th avenue. One of these included the victory design, in the center of a large "V," over which is an arch composed of Old Glory, the Union Jack and the service flag, supported by Uncle Sam and Columbia, between whom are the statue of liberty and the word 'invest.'

"On Armistice day of 1919 a handmade copy of victory (to which I must plead guilty of painting, as well as the posters) was sent to the White House. During the latter part of November this city welcomed the first visit of the Prince of Wales. Just before he left these shores another handmade copy was personally presented by the designer to the prince as he boarded the motor boat which took him to H. M. S. Renown. There is a saying that what is twice is thrice. So this third anniversary of Armistice day another handmade copy will be presented to the next President of the United States. At least three victories will occur this November, and it is a coincidence that they come so near together: That of the armistice, the Red Cross roll call and for one of the political parties.

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"But victory in the design must have no other meaning that that specifically expressed: 'As a background the paths of life, with all their meanings, from victory over suffering and death, to the spirit of brotherhood and high ideals, reaching north, south, east and west, with an earnest binding influence, into all space—and a background that signifies peace, which all these things mean.' To this could be added: 'Let it be sincerely hoped that war no more may come to pass, and the word victory henceforth be connected and used, when a man comes to himself, to law, principles and God-consciousness.' The whole design is purely symbolical and the personal victory of one nation over another, or combination of nations over another, is begging the question, and decidedly out of place in the broader views and visions that have been more thoroughly awakened throughout the whole world."

Life in Exile of Former Rulers of Austria-Hungary

BY MARGARET B. DOWNING.

ABOUT Lake Geneva during the past summer, the usual crowd of tourists—a generous quota of Americans—enjoyed the familiar pleasures of Vevey, Montreux, Villeneuve and Territet. But the more discriminating of the tourists to whom the Swiss side of the lake offers more in natural beauty, in quiet and picturesque surroundings than the gay whirl of social life and an amazing display of fashions, found the small towns of Nyon, Gland and Celigny somewhat changed. For instance, from Prangins, Nyon and Gland, an hour's walk through an enchanted woods of linden, maple, oak, cedars and araucarias brought one out to a secluded harbor of the lake, where clustered romantic-looking fisher huts and an immemorial lighthouse, offered material for a sketch or an hour's musing or some calm hours devoted to Isaac Walton's philosophy.

However, a certain distance in the forest, the pedestrian meets a guard pacing along a high fence, who courteously turns the stranger back, pointing out a path which will lead to another outlet of the lake and which is not on the private domain of the former emperor of the dual monarchies Austria-Hungary and their many dependencies. Villa Prangins lies in the heart of the great woods and seemingly the Swiss have granted ex-territorial rights to the exiles for they are guarded and secluded as they would be in the splendid chateau of Schoenbrunn, in Vienna.

* * * *

Villa Prangins has for centuries offered asylums to various kinds of exiles—political, religious and intellectual. The spot is filled with memories of Calvin, who occupied a lodge in the woods to get away for a season from the chatter and excitement of Geneva. Voltaire lived at the villa proper for a time, Mme. de Stael took over her father's retreat on the lake, and M. Necker occupied the same rooms in the tower from which the last of the Hapsburgs looks down on a changing and forgetful world.

After the abdication of his brother, Joseph Bonaparte bought the villa and spent many years of exile in its lonely forests. In a later period, many of the Bourbons, hurled first from one throne to another, took over this quiet and peaceful home, the rulers of Naples being the last to live there before the property passed into the hands of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Switzerland, to become a home for their brotherhood. This religious community sold the villa and its hundreds of acres early in the nineties to the Count de Pourtales, whose son Raymond was married—in Washington to the daughter of the German ambassador, von Bernstorff. Former Emperor Charles purchased directly from Count de Pourtales, who is a Bavarian and a Catholic, a sympathizer with the lost cause of the Hapsburgs.

Perhaps it is because Charles enjoyed the perogatives of his high office so briefly, that seemingly he regrets them so little. From the lake, tourists and residents of the little Swiss towns frequently see him and his children walking, sailing, fishing, as calmly as the other inhabitants of the castles nearby. Except to preserve the privacy of his home, all the Hapsburg family mingle on easy terms with whoever they meet. The three boys, Otto, Robert and Felix, go to the Grisons for the winter months, where they skate, sleigh and toboggan, unattended except by their usual companion, a burly peasant, who carries their skates and sport togs. The ex-emperor frequently tires of the fishing grounds about his jetty and moves along the shore, sharing bait and exchanging greetings with passersby. Ex-Empress Zita and her little daughter Adelaide make shopping excursions into Nyon and sometimes into Geneva.

Villa Prangins has been refitted with such of the personal and private property of the exiles as the present government of Austria would permit them to remove from their former home outside Vienna. In addition to the imperial couples, as they are still known in the land of the Swiss, there is the stately mother of Charles, the Archduchess Marie-Josepha, who was the cousin of her husband and born a Hapsburg as well as married to one. She maintains more state than her son and never sails on the lake or strolls in the woods without the usual attendance of courtiers and llevried lackeys.

Charles, however, dispenses with all the regalia to which he had been accustomed since birth. He invariably wears the costume of the Alpine climber in the mornings and a dark business suit in the afternoon, when he walks along the high stone walk which breaks the waves of the lake for more than ten miles along this part of the shore. There are five children. A boy was born some fifteen months ago, called Rudolf. The present Roman pontiff, Benedict XV, is his god-father. Besides the three older boys there is that dark-eyed little princess who inherits all the beauty of her mother's family, the Bourbons of Parma, whose annals are filled with dark tragedies.

But the life of the exiles is simplicity and economy combined, the children are being trained as though they are destined to fill the same high positions which was theirs before Franz Josef cast his lot with the kaiser. For even though they never